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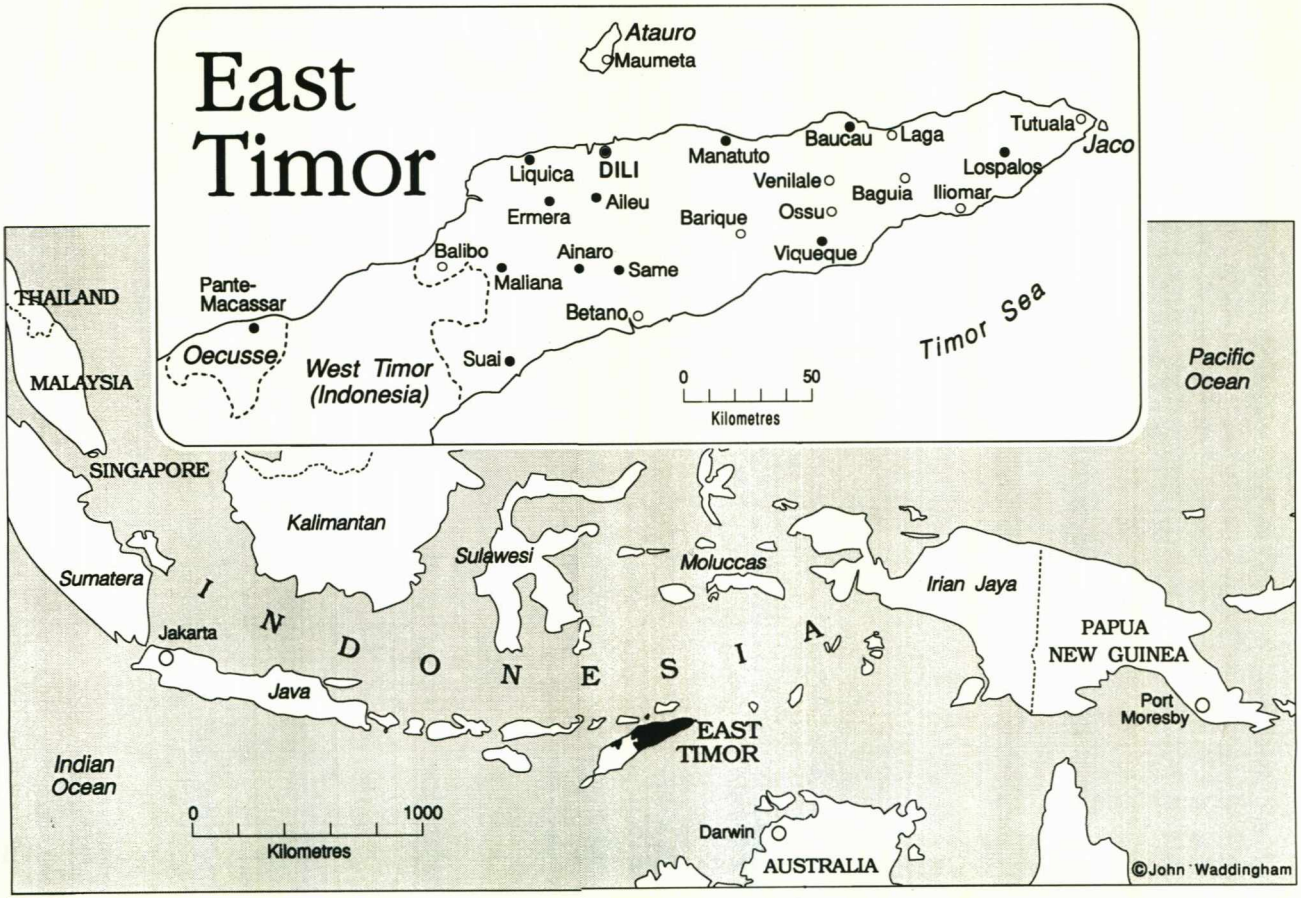
EAST TIMOR
The continuing betrayal

comment


East Timor
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THAILAND
MALAYSIA
SINGAPORE
Kalimantan
Sumatera
Jakarta
Java
Sulawesi
Moluccas
Irian Jaya
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
Port Moresby
INDONESIA
EAST TIMOR
Indian Ocean
Pacific Ocean
0
1000
Kilometres
Darwin
AUSTRALIA
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East Timor

On 12 November 1991 Indonesian soldiers massacred more than 250 East Timorese civilians at the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili, the capital of East Timor. The slaughter was captured on video by British journalist Max Stahl and the film was broadcast worldwide to international outcry.

Previous human rights violations perpetrated by Indonesia since it invaded East Timor in 1975 had taken place largely beyond the reach of television cameras. The Santa Cruz massacre raised international awareness of East Timor. Today, news and current affairs programmes cite the territory as a place where human rights are systematically abused. In Britain, Indonesia's occupation of East Timor was frequently highlighted amid discussions over the 1995 Pergau Dam scandal and the 1996 Scott inquiry. Both of these showed how British aid and trade policies have been found to be at best incoherently applied, at worst openly ignored.

This *Comment* assesses the East Timorese struggle for independence 20 years on from the Indonesian invasion. It examines the prospects for a just peace in the light of Indonesia's concern for its own reputation, and the tendency of many countries to subordinate human rights to commercial considerations. Among the key players – local and international – the *Comment* examines the role of the Roman Catholic church, which has been central in defending the people of East Timor and articulating their aspirations.

Introduction

Timor, one of the easternmost islands of the Indonesian archipelago, lies 482 kilometres north of Darwin, Australia. The island was settled by Malay, Melanesian and Polynesian peoples before the arrival of Dutch and Portuguese settlers, who fought each other for control of the island from the 1600s and divided the territory between them in the early 20th century, the Portuguese settling in the eastern half and the Dutch in the west. With the independence of the former Dutch East Indies shortly after the Second World War, West Timor joined Indonesia while East Timor remained a Portuguese colony.

The experience of Portuguese colonialism united East Timor's people, giving rise to the development of nationalism. Portuguese rule made few inroads into East Timorese social structures until the end of the 19th century when, in response to East Timorese rebellions, Portugal introduced a political system to undercut the power of traditional leaders, the *liurais*.

Occupation by the Japanese during the Second World War heightened Timorese nationalism. Although 14 per cent of the population, or up to 80,000 people, died in reprisals for their support for Australian commandos, the basic elements of Timorese society – its kinship system and political and social alliances within and between communities – survived the

East Timor

Area	14,874 sq km
Population	830,000
Capital	Dili
Languages	Tetum (local language and 15 dialects), Bahasa Indonesia, Portuguese spoken by older generation.
Religion (% of population)	Catholic 80-90, Muslim 4*, Protestant 3, plus others including Buddhist and Hindu.

Source: Saldanha, João Mariano de Sousa (1994), *The Political Economy of East Timor Development.*
*Not including the estimated 100,000 Muslim transmigrants in East Timor; see page 15.

occupation. They also frustrated Indonesian attempts to destroy Timorese society and identity.

In the 1970s East Timor – poor, with a small population and severely underdeveloped under its Portuguese colonial rulers – attracted the interest of larger countries chiefly for the oil and gas fields under the Timor Sea between the island and Australia.

In the period 1974-75 East Timor began a process of decolonisation, following the overthrow of the 48-year-old dictatorship in Portugal. As Portuguese colonies began to gain their independence, newly formed East Timorese political parties discussed options for the future: federation with Portugal; independence; or integration with Indonesia, its large and populous neighbour. Prominent in the leadership of these parties was an East Timorese elite educated in church-run seminaries. However, in December 1975 Indonesia invaded and seized control.

A decade and a half later, the demonstrations leading up to the Santa Cruz massacre showed that the East Timorese continued to dispute Indonesian rule, despite Indonesia's claims to have integrated the territory as its 27th province in 1976. The legal right of the East Timorese to self-determination is no secret to the foreign ministries of the world: between 1975 and 1982 the United Nations passed 10 resolutions refusing to recognise Indonesia's claim to East Timor. The last UN General Assembly resolution on East Timor, No 37/30 of 23 November 1982 recognises 'the inalienable right of all peoples to self-determination and independence in accordance with the principles of the charter of United Nations', and 'requests the UN secretary general to initiate consultations with all parties directly concerned with a view to exploring avenues for a comprehensive settlement of the problem'. But, in the absence of support from the major powers, little has been done to implement the UN resolutions.

Impact of the Santa Cruz massacre

Santa Cruz proved to be a turning point. People the world over were shocked by the sight of demonstrators being killed. The massacre also brought down unprecedented criticism on the

Indonesian military regime from western governments and Japan. Indonesia's foreign minister Ali Alatas was obliged to undertake a world tour to mollify international public opinion and assure governments that action would be taken against the people responsible.

Although an internal inquiry was launched by the Indonesian authorities, it was severely compromised by its composition of retired military generals and failed to satisfy international human rights organisations, the International Commission of Jurists and various UN Special Rapporteurs. The victims rather than the perpetrators were blamed. While Indonesian soldiers who had fired on civilians received 18 month sentences – which most did not serve – some East Timorese organisers of the demonstration were jailed for as long as 20 years. One was sentenced to life imprisonment. Appeals for clemency for the East Timorese have been ignored. Five years on, the Indonesian military authorities are still being criticised by independent sources, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, for their failure to account for all the dead and disappeared.

Changing context

Global political changes and greater media coverage have altered the context of the East Timorese struggle for self-determination. Public awareness and lobbying efforts on East Timor increased after the Santa Cruz massacre, and interest was kept up by two television documentaries, *Cold Blood* (1992), by Peter Gordon and Max Stahl and *Death of a Nation* (1994), by John Pilger and David Munro. On the night of the UK broadcast of *Death of a Nation* 4,000 calls a minute were recorded to a special helpline until 3 am.

More important, by the 1990s western governments were prepared to reconsider their approaches to a range of conflicts previously subordinated to cold war considerations. Indonesia's occupation of East Timor had received tacit encouragement, particularly from the United States and Australia, because of western hostility to leftwing governments. The possibility of an independent East Timor had called up visions of an Asian Cuba on Indonesia's

doorstep. With the end of the superpower conflict, East Timor crept up the list of foreign affairs priorities, both at the United Nations and for western governments.

Because of Indonesia's regional importance, its neighbours – particularly members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) – have been publicly silent over East Timor. However, the illegal occupation became a focus of international attention and diplomatic argument when Indonesia's President Suharto tried, unsuccessfully, to prevent the modest non-governmental Asia Pacific Conference on East Timor from taking place in the Philippines in June 1994.

Recent history – decolonisation interrupted

During the 1974-75 process of decolonisation, only the smallest of the new political parties, the Timorese Popular Democratic Association (Apodeti), had supported union with Indonesia. Most influential at first was the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT), which favoured federation with Portugal. The Social Democratic Association of Timor (ASDT) – later to become the Revolutionary Front for the Independence of East Timor (Fretilin) – advanced more radical ideas. Its manifesto called for rejection of colonialism and racial discrimination and demanded the right to independence, immediate participation in local government, and a campaign against corruption. Whereas the UDT favoured a substantial role for foreign companies in the development of East Timor's tourism and mining industries, Fretilin advanced a policy of self-reliance and strict economic controls (policies common to many third world economies at the time). The two parties also differed on social policy. Fretilin launched an education programme based on the 'conscientisation' method, and introduced production cooperatives, together with some preliminary measures of land reform. UDT called for democratisation, income redistribution and human rights.

Both organisations, nevertheless, were in favour of an orderly, gradual process of decolonisation and, from January to May 1975, the UDT and Fretilin formed a coalition, encouraged by the Portuguese. This was aimed at devising proposals for a transitional government and it agreed on 'total

independence, rejection of integration, repudiation of colonialism and recognition of decolonisation'. The coalition's collapse was more a result of Indonesia's increasingly aggressive tactics than unbridgeable policy differences between the two parties.

As late as June 1974, Indonesia's foreign minister Adam Malik had reassured the decolonising parties in East Timor in a letter to Fretilin's José Ramos Horta that 'the independence of every country is the right of every nation, with no exception for the people in Timor'; that the government had no intention of expanding or occupying other territories; and that 'whoever governed in Timor after independence could be assured of Indonesian friendship and cooperation'.

Indonesian destabilisation and civil war

With the oil crisis driving up the price of oil, the possibility of there being large hydrocarbon deposits in the Timor Gap – the sea between Timor and Australia – was a decisive factor in Indonesia's takeover of East Timor. (Such a resource would have safeguarded East Timor's viability as an independent nation.) Indonesia and Australia had been negotiating over a maritime boundary, but part of the area of interest belonged to East Timor. Australian oil companies were keen to gain access, and alarmed at Portugal's granting of concessions to US companies. This contributed to Australian corporate lobbying in favour of integration with Indonesia. In September 1974 Australia's prime minister Gough Whitlam declared his support for Indonesia's annexation of East Timor, only a few months after Indonesia's foreign minister had assured Fretilin that Jakarta had no claim on the territory.

From that point, with policies driven by hardline military figures, Indonesian pressure increased inexorably. Indonesian discussions with Apodeti in September 1974 were backed by broadcasts claiming Fretilin was 'communist' and the UDT 'neo-fascist' and 'colonialist'. In March 1975 the Indonesian authorities barred journalists from crossing the border between East and West Timor. In August 1975, having been warned by Indonesian intelligence chiefs that Indonesia would intervene if Fretilin gained power, UDT leaders attempted a

coup to prevent this. They seized key installations and issued an ultimatum to the Portuguese authorities demanding immediate independence and the imprisonment of certain Fretilin leaders. The Portuguese provincial government rejected the ultimatum but chose not to intervene. Fighting broke out in Dili and spread to the central mountain districts.

In the civil war of 11 August to 24 September 1975, between 1,500 and 2,500 people were killed, most of them in the mountain areas.[1] However, East Timorese colonial troops under Portuguese command deserted en masse with their arms and equipment to join Fretilin, which already had the support of much of the rural population. By September 1975 Fretilin was in control of virtually all of East Timor.

Fretilin wanted independence to be achieved over a period of five years, and opposed an early declaration of independence. It continued to recognise Portuguese sovereignty and called on the governor, who had transferred his residence to the island of Atauro during the fighting, to return to Dili and resume the process of decolonisation. Portugal's refusal to do so transformed Fretilin into the de facto government, and between September and November 1975 it administered the territory. During this period Fretilin leaders repeatedly declared their willingness to live in harmony with Timor's neighbours in the region, and invited delegations from Indonesia and Australia to visit Dili. Observers in Timor at the time recognised that Fretilin governed responsibly and enjoyed popular support.

The invasion

After Fretilin's victory in the civil war, Indonesian forces mounted increasingly extensive and aggressive operations, with border incursions beginning in September 1975.[2] On 16 October Indonesian soldiers killed five foreign television journalists, thereby preventing visual proof of Indonesia's covert invasion from reaching the outside world. On 28 November, in a desperate attempt to attract diplomatic support as a full-scale Indonesian invasion approached, Fretilin leaders declared independence and proclaimed the Democratic Republic of East Timor. Indonesia mounted an

all-out assault by sea and air on 7 December 1975.

It is difficult to overstate the brutality of the physical abuse, torture, murder and rape of the East Timorese by the invading Indonesian army. It is widely accepted that at least 200,000 East Timorese have died since the invasion of 1975 as a result of war, famine, disease, and extrajudicial killing. This represents about one-third of the entire population, based on Portuguese estimates of 1974 which suggested the population numbered between 650,000 and 690,000. As a proportion of the population this figure represents more than the number who died in Cambodia under Pol Pot. According to an Amnesty International report of 1985, there is 'considerable evidence that Indonesian forces in East Timor resorted to large scale extrajudicial executions from the first day of the invasion'.[3]

Sovereignty

Fretilin initially argued that its unilateral declaration of independence was an act of self-determination. Portugal's view is that East Timor has not yet exercised its right to self-determination, and that Portugal has a continuing responsibility to assist the territory to independence. Both deny that Indonesia has sovereignty over East Timor.

Indonesia asserts that East Timorese political leaders representing the UDT, Apodeti and two smaller groups signed the so-called Balibo Declaration inviting Indonesia to take over East Timor on 30 November 1975. Guilherme Gonçalves, governor of East Timor from 1978 to 1982 and one of the signatories, dissociated himself from the document in 1995, saying 'integration has failed'. He confirmed that the document was not even signed in the East Timorese town of Balibo, but on the Indonesian island of Bali.

Following the invasion, on 31 May 1976 Indonesia appointed the so-called Timorese People's Assembly. After meeting for two hours in Dili under military supervision, this body approved a petition for the integration of East Timor into the Indonesian state. This charade has never been internationally recognised. The United Nations considers the People's Assembly to have been an unrepresentative body acting under duress. On 17 July 1976, President Suharto formally declared

the incorporation of East Timor as a province of the Republic of Indonesia – a claim the United Nations has never recognised. Indonesia has advanced other arguments to justify the invasion: contiguity, the historical unity of the island of Timor, and the need for regional stability. In other words, it claims that a small independent (and potentially socialist) state in the midst of its territory could be detrimental to its security. These specious arguments are contradicted by the Suharto government's own formal declaration before 1976 that it had no claims on any territory which had not formed part of the Dutch East Indies. The International Court of Justice has ruled that such declarations by a state are binding on its future conduct. In law, the case against Indonesia is unanswerable.[4]

Consequences of the invasion

Virtually every East Timorese has lost a close relative – some nearly all their family – over the past 20 years. Many people have simply disappeared. Survivors remain traumatised. Although mass killings are less frequent now than they were immediately after the invasion, physical brutality, torture and intimidation will continue to paralyse East Timor as long as high concentrations of Indonesian soldiers remain in the territory. Even the remotest villages are watched by military personnel.

After the invasion, tens of thousands of people fled to the hills with Falintil, which was until the mid 1980s the armed wing of Fretilin and is now the armed wing of the whole resistance movement. Many of the people who fled perished from wounds, disease and starvation. The Indonesians relocated whole villages in order to separate civilians from the resistance movement. Massive bombings by the Indonesian air force drove people from their land and brought about a catastrophic famine, killing many thousands between 1978 and early 1980. New, strategically located villages were constructed by the army and watched day and night. Nevertheless, it is estimated that as late as 1987 up to a quarter of a million people were living in areas outside Indonesian control.[5]

Once installed, the Indonesian administration moved to

impose the official pan-Indonesian language, Bahasa Indonesia, on the East Timorese. Traditional Timorese culture was stifled, communities broken apart, kinship ties eroded.

Twenty years and many military operations later, the army is still hunting down the resistance. It operates a divide and rule strategy, bribing and recruiting East Timorese to commit acts of violence against their fellow Timorese. Informers and agents, known as *bufos*, have been cultivated to infiltrate the population, creating an atmosphere of extreme distrust. The military frequently inserts squads of youths into the crowds at public gatherings, especially those attended by foreign visitors, to provoke violence so as to provide an excuse for military crackdown.

Complicity of western governments

The political status of East Timor remains disputed. The United Nations has never recognised the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia. Since 1982 the UN secretary general has been entrusted with overseeing negotiations between the former colonial power, Portugal, and the present rulers, Indonesia in order to bring about a 'comprehensive settlement of the problem'. These negotiations have been unproductive and the position of the two governments remains diametrically opposed.

There should be no surprise about this. Indonesia invaded East Timor with the connivance of many western governments as well as Japan. Declassification of confidential communications from western embassies in Jakarta has exposed the cynicism of the governments of the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom, whose intelligence services were aware of Indonesia's destabilising role in the territory, as well as its aggressive intentions. They chose to turn a blind eye. US president Gerald Ford and secretary of state Henry Kissinger had visited Jakarta two days prior to the invasion. The sympathy they showed for the difficulties Indonesia faced over East Timor was taken by the Jakarta regime as a green light for an invasion. A US embassy communiqué to Washington in the summer of 1975 simply voiced the hope that the invasion would proceed quickly and not use American

equipment.[6] In fact, 90 per cent of the military equipment used during the invasion had been supplied by the United States.[7]

This is the second explanation for western complicity. Not only would Indonesia be a bulwark against what was thought to be creeping communist influence in Asia, but as the fifth (now fourth) most populous nation on earth, it was and is a huge market for western goods, including arms.

Arms sales

US and British arms – particularly counterinsurgency aircraft – were decisive in the Indonesian suppression of East Timorese resistance after the occupation. The most important aircraft were sold by the US government, especially the enormously destructive Bronco OV10 counterinsurgency planes, used extensively in Vietnam. Indonesia also purchased Sabres from Malaysia, Alouette helicopters from France and Hawk trainer-fighter jets from Britain. Mountain areas where the civilian population had taken refuge were bombed, preventing the people from supporting themselves through agriculture.

Arms sales continue. The British government sold a warship to Indonesia within two months of the Santa Cruz massacre. In 1993 Germany sold 39 ships from the former East German navy. A new sale of 24 British Aerospace Hawk trainer jets was granted an export licence in November 1995. Other British sales have included navy frigates, Hawk trainer/strike aircraft, Rapier air defence missiles, Seawolf missile launchers, Saladin, Saracen and Ferret armoured cars, Land Rovers, as well as training to Indonesian military personnel.

Arms sales have become even more difficult to justify in the post-cold war era, when armies have been scaled down and there is talk of a peace dividend. Referring to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Australia's prime minister Bob Hawke declared that 'big countries cannot invade small neighbours and get away with it'. In view of Australia's de jure recognition of the Indonesian annexation of East Timor, the irony was not lost on the East Timorese nor the Australian public, many of whom are deeply ashamed of their government's position.

Arms sales

Main suppliers of major weapons systems to Indonesia, 1988-92

Country	Value of arms sales (US$ millions)
United States	390
Netherlands	341
UK	201
Germany	156

Indonesia was the sixth largest recipient of UK weapons systems in this period.

Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

Principal actors — East Timorese resistance

The East Timorese resistance has refused to be beaten. Since 1975, combatants in the resistance army Falintil have remained in the mountains, conducting a guerrilla war against the Indonesian military. Although their numbers have declined, they have succeeded in the past few years in pinning down at least 10 battalions of Indonesian soldiers. The guerrillas have few resources, no external supplies of weaponry, and for food, water and medicines depend almost entirely on the support of a clandestine movement within the East Timorese population. They gather their weapons from the Indonesian army, through ambushes and bribery.

The original leader of Fretilin, Nicolau Lobato, was killed in 1978. He was replaced by the charismatic José Alexandre Gusmão or 'Xanana', a popular and highly successful leader of Falintil and a junior leader in Fretilin. In 1986 a National Convergence was formed, bringing Fretilin and UDT together and acknowledging that the resistance had come to represent a much broader coalition than simply Fretilin supporters. In 1989 Xanana resigned as leader of Fretilin, and instead became leader of the whole resistance movement. The new resistance body, the Conselho Nacional da Resistencia Maubere[8] (CNRM — National Council of Maubere Resistance), is a non-party political front and aims to unite all those in favour of independence.

Outside the territory the resistance has been represented by a number of East Timorese exiles. Among the best-known is José Ramos Horta, who since 1978 has spoken for East Timorese aspirations at UN fora such as the Commission on Human Rights.

Xanana Gusmão was captured by the Indonesian army in November 1992, and was tried and jailed for rebellion and the possession of firearms. His life sentence was commuted to 20 years, and he was transferred to Cipinang prison in Jakarta. Xanana is seen by many as an Asian Nelson Mandela, and it remains the principal demand of the East Timorese resistance that he be allowed out of prison to negotiate at round table talks.

Principal actors — The Roman Catholic church

The Catholic church has been for the East Timorese a source of both spiritual solace and continuity in a society which has suffered a profound trauma. It has also offered a cultural and public space not occupied by the Indonesian authorities. Even before the invasion, the church's influence in East Timor extended beyond its members. It ran most of the schools and its network of mission stations brought it into wide contact with the people. It is not surprising, therefore, that the great majority of Timorese opted for Catholicism when they were required to adopt a religion recognised by the Indonesian doctrine of Pancasila. (Other religions permitted by Pancasila are Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Protestantism.) According to 1996 Vatican statistics, 692,000 of East Timor's population of 834,000 are Catholics: more than 80 per cent — up from 30 per cent in 1975. (This figure includes a small number of Indonesian Catholics living in East Timor.) Conversion to Catholicism has been partly caused by a rejection of 'Islamic' Indonesia, but also by the recognition that the Catholic church in East Timor offers physical protection from persecution, negotiation with the authorities, and advocacy of human rights and human values. Its growing membership means that the church can reasonably claim to represent the views of the majority of East Timor's people.

Many news reports in 1995 and 1996 blamed 'religious

tensions' for riots and conflict. The Indonesian government has long operated a policy of 'transmigration' – resettling Indonesians in East Timor. It is believed that more than 100,000 transmigrants (most of them Muslim) have settled. Many of them were forced to move, some were encouraged by government offers of land and jobs and others are independent economic migrants. The rapid influx has disturbed communities, as has the preferential access to land and employment given to the newcomers. Consequent outbursts of violence are rooted in East Timorese rejection of foreign domination rather than in religious antagonisms.

The Indonesian invasion and occupation has proved a period of trial from which the church has emerged strengthened. The invasion broke its links with the former colonial government and obliged priests and religious to choose sides. In general the Timorese church opted to stay close to the people and to protect them – in many cases literally, as priests fled with their parishioners into the mountains to escape Indonesian troops and bombing raids. The Timorese clergy, largely unaided and isolated from the outside world, developed its own theology and spirituality of resistance. This theology, while expressed within a traditionalist Catholic framework, emphasised human rights and justice, national identity and culture. It defined the church in terms of the East Timorese people, rather than of the Indonesian state.

East Timor being the subject of an international dispute, the Vatican undertook direct administration of the diocese of Dili, which covers the whole of East Timor. From the time of the invasion until 1989, when the territory was opened to visitors, the Catholic church was the only institution in East Timor that communicated independently with the outside world, maintaining international institutional connections. It was therefore vouchsafed a certain independence from the Indonesian authorities. It retains this role in the 1990s.

Diocesan resistance

The first native East Timorese Apostolic Administrator, appointed in 1977, Monsignor da Costa Lopes, won popular respect for his attempts to protect individuals from abusive

treatment and for his condemnation of human rights violations and corruption. Under pressure from Jakarta and fearing a Muslim backlash, the Vatican removed da Costa Lopes in 1983. His successor, Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, was expected to play a more conciliatory role. However, Bishop Belo also has spoken out about human rights abuses, despite enormous pressure from the authorities, who were embarrassed by the international and local publicity that the church's criticisms attracted. In September 1995 the face of Bishop Belo was printed alongside that of the writer Salman Rushdie on the cover of a Muslim Indonesian magazine, *Umat*, under the headline 'Enemies of Islam'. *Umat* is controlled by a close associate of President Suharto. The regime's attempts to discredit Bishop Belo stem from the threat he poses to hopes of ending international discussion on East Timor's sovereignty. In 1995 Bishop Belo was shortlisted for the Nobel Peace Prize. Indonesia did not want his international standing further enhanced, especially given his key role in the intra-East Timorese talks *(see page 32)*.

The growth in the Catholic church's membership has presented Bishop Belo with a huge workload. But in view of the role he plays in the defence of the human rights of his people, the appointment of additional bishops to the diocese is a highly sensitive matter. It could be interpreted as an attempt to undermine Belo, which would not help the cause internationally.

The visit to East Timor in February 1996 of the President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Cardinal Roger Etchegeray, known as a diplomatic troubleshooter for the Vatican, appears to have solidified support for Bishop Belo in Rome. In a statement afterwards, Cardinal Etchegeray reaffirmed his conviction that 'there can be no justice without peace and [...] there can be no peace without justice. Respect for human rights is the only way in which justice and peace can be brought to live together.' He echoed the Pope's call for dialogue. 'Dialogue is difficult: it requires courage, patience and determination. Dialogue requires mutual respect and understanding by all parties. It requires giving space to all, especially to young people, to express their concerns [...] In

such a dialogue there must be space for the realisation of the legitimate aspirations of the Timorese people to see their special culture and religious identity recognised.'

Bishop Belo himself maintains that the people must be allowed to express themselves freely. In 1989 he wrote to the UN secretary general Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, repeating his call for a referendum: 'The people of Timor must be allowed to express their views on their future through a plebiscite. Hitherto, the people have not been consulted. Others speak in the name of the people. Indonesia says that the people of East Timor have already chosen integration, but the people of East Timor themselves have never said this. Portugal wants time to solve the problem. And we continue to die as a people and as a nation.'

Pope John Paul II has expressed his concern about East Timor on several occasions, most notably by celebrating mass there during his visit to Indonesia in 1989. In 1995, when accepting the credentials of Indonesia's ambassador to the Holy See, the Pope spoke of the need for 'more appropriate measures to ensure that human rights are respected, and that the cultural and religious values of the people are respected and promoted [so that] a climate of trust will be established, which in turn will favour integral development'. He also asked for dialogue 'to advance a form of social and political life which [...] will respond to the aspirations of East Timor's inhabitants'.

The Catholic church presents the Indonesian authorities with a dilemma. Since the church is the only voice most East Timorese respect, Indonesia has to build some sort of partnership with the clergy in order to make any headway on integration. From Indonesia's point of view, this risks strengthening the church's position still further.

Principal actors — the Protestant churches

While small in numbers, the Protestant community in East Timor, until recently dominated by migrants and Indonesian military, is becoming an increasingly indigenous church: the Gereja Kristen Timor Timur (GKTT), a Dili-based Protestant church, is now 80 per cent Timorese. Previously under the

ecclesiastical and political guidance of the large Indonesian Communion of Churches, which is closely aligned with the Indonesian government, the GKTT has recently gained independent membership of the World Council of Churches (WCC). The significance of this is that, whereas the GKTT could previously be outvoted by Indonesian Protestants, it can now talk directly to the WCC. Independent membership of the WCC also represents a tacit recognition that East Timor is not Indonesian. GKTT's leadership has also been speaking out more clearly and independently than previously on the issue of self-determination. In 1995, Reverend Arlindo Marçal, pastor of the GKTT and leader of its synod, stated that 'the East Timorese should be provided with the opportunity to determine for themselves whether they really want to be integrated into Indonesia or not'.

Principal actors — Indonesia

It is unlikely that the Indonesian authorities foresaw in 1975 that they would still be dealing with the consequences of their actions in East Timor 20 years later, or that Indonesia's record there would be so regularly held against it in diplomatic circles. Nor can they have anticipated the determination of the East Timorese to resist.

Indonesia remains under the military rule of President Suharto. An army general, he came to power in the wake of a 1965 coup attempt of uncertain origin which was blamed on the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). In the ensuing pogroms against alleged communist sympathisers between October 1965 and early 1966, it is thought that at least half a million people and possibly more than 1 million were slaughtered by, or at the orders of, the armed forces.

Power of the military

Suharto has presided over an enforced stability, thanks to the omnipresent Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI). Rights of association are restricted, human rights violations are common, the media are controlled, and public demonstrations of dissent are swiftly suppressed. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are limited in their operations, so critical

Indonesia

Area:	1.9 million sq km (excluding East Timor)
Population:	193.1 million
Capital:	Jakarta
Languages:	Bahasa Indonesia, plus at least 200 regional languages. Javanese native to 60 million inhabitants
Religion (% of pop)	Muslim 87, Protestant 6, Roman Catholic 3, Hindu 2, Buddhist 1, others 1

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit; *Financial Times*, 9 June 1995; *The World: A Third World Guide 1995/96*; National Development Office, Indonesia

voices are easily muzzled. Indonesia's sustained economic growth has not been accompanied by an equitable distribution of wealth nor by eradication of poverty.

The military throughout Indonesia is designed to exercise a dual function (*dwi fungsi*), combining socio-political and military activities. Indonesia justifies the presence of its battalions in East Timor by explaining that most are there for 'development' rather than security purposes. However, as numerous reports from Amnesty International and others attest, the violence in East Timor is far from over.

There are signs that the military and diplomatic wings of government find themselves increasingly at odds over the Timor question. Foreign minister Alatas has described it as 'gravel in Indonesia's shoe'. From the point of view of Alatas and others, it has hobbled Indonesia's ambitions on the world stage. The *New York Times* of 23 June 1996 stressed that 'Suharto's main claim to foreign recognition is the brutal occupation of East Timor'.

A growing number of Indonesian intellectuals think a change of policy is needed. A 1990 Indonesian study – subsequently banned – of the impact of the integration of East Timor, led by Professor Mubyarto of Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, was revealing. Originally commissioned to investigate why East Timor was still so poor and backward

despite the large amount of Indonesian investment in the territory, it acknowledged the trauma suffered by the East Timorese and its effect in preventing peace and development, as well as in alienating Timorese from Indonesian rule.

Within the armed forces, too, opinion is divided. After the Santa Cruz massacre, the regime responded to the security situation by placing harder line officers in key positions. However, some younger officers have spoken openly of the need to address East Timorese grievances and grant some measure of autonomy. Suharto's own son-in-law, Colonel Prabowo Subianto, was promoted in December 1995 to command Indonesia's special forces regiment, Kopassus. He is known to favour special administrative status for East Timor. However, those in ultimate charge of military decision-making have resisted any discussion of withdrawal. It is estimated that ABRI has lost up to 20,000 soldiers in East Timor, but the territory remains an important testing and training ground. Above all, withdrawal from East Timor would represent a loss of face which the higher echelons of military command would find hard to contemplate.

Another frequently cited reason for Indonesia's refusal to grant self determination to East Timor is its fear of encouraging separatist movements in parts of Indonesia such

Aid to Indonesia: disbursements, total Official Development Assistance net (US$ millions)

	EU aid channelled through European Commission	Total EU aid (Commission and member states)	United States	Japan
1989	13.9	390.6	31.0	1,145.3
1990	12.4	482.6	31.0	867.8
1991	12.0	528.3	18.0	1,065.5
1992	13.0	367.0	-1.0	1,356.7
1993	13.5	531.8	-6.0	1,148.9

Source: OECD-Development Assistance Committee

as Irian Jaya/West Papua and Aceh, which also have a history of resistance to Jakarta's rule.

In addition, ABRI has taken over much of East Timor's trade and has substantial interests in coffee, which accounts for 90 per cent of East Timor's exports, as well as marble, sandalwood and other products. It stands to lose financially from any withdrawal. But such financial loss should be regarded as minor in comparison with the degree of damage to Indonesia's international status while it remains in East Timor.

Principal actors — Portugal

Recognised by the United Nations as the 'administering power' in East Timor, and therefore the government with responsibility for representing East Timor's people in international negotiations, Portugal will play an indispensable role in any settlement. The Portuguese constitution states that Portugal shall remain bound by its 'responsibilities under international law to promote and safeguard the right to self-determination and independence of East Timor'. Although Portuguese diplomacy was in a state of confusion for two years after the revolution of 1974, Lisbon remained passive through the worst years of the repression. During critical periods of negotiation in 1974 and 1975 some senior officials and politicians virtually acquiesced in the Indonesian takeover. In the early 1980s, however, President Ramalho Eanes took up the issue again. He was succeeded in 1986 by Mario Soares, who showed considerable commitment to the Timor question until he left office in early 1996.

Portuguese public opinion on East Timor was strongly affected by the Santa Cruz massacre, especially by the television coverage. Portugal's new socialist government, elected in October 1995, has promised to maintain the commitment exhibited by its predecessor. Relations between Portugal and Indonesia were broken off in the wake of the latter's invasion of East Timor, but in March 1996 the new Portuguese prime minister, Antonio Guterres, offered to exchange diplomatic interest sections in exchange for the release of the resistance leader, Xanana Gusmão, and other political prisoners. It remains to be seen how Indonesia will respond to this offer.

Portugal can bring little direct pressure to bear on Indonesia. Its ability to secure a settlement depends on the readiness of other governments to offer international backing and on changes in policy in Indonesia itself. It is here that Portugal's European allies and the United States and Japan, which have friendly relations with Indonesia, might play a constructive role.

Principal actors – the European Union

The European Union relates to Indonesia both bilaterally and through the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), of which Indonesia is a member. Prompted by Asia's increasing economic importance, the Union has recently re-evaluated its policy towards the region. Between 1990 and 1994, EU exports to ASEAN rose by 73 per cent.[9] A 1994 policy document by the European Union Commission, *Towards a New Asia Strategy*, acknowledged that Asia will be the world's fastest growing region in the next century. Europe is anxious not to be squeezed out of any opportunities by Japan and the United States. For this reason, the first ever meeting of Asian and European heads of state (the Asia-Europe meeting – ASEM) was held in Bangkok in March 1996.

Political stance

Some aspects of EU policy are devoted to political dialogue, although there is an acknowledgement that Asian regimes, Indonesia in particular, have not taken kindly to European criticism of their human rights practices. The Portuguese government has blocked the signing of a new EU-ASEAN trade agreement in an attempt to exert its influence over any upgrading of trade with Indonesia. This tactic has irritated not only Asian but also many European governments, which argue that the new agreement contains a human rights clause within its rubric. Portugal remains justifiably sceptical that the human rights clause would ever be effectively applied.

Many European Union countries (including Britain), Australia, the United States, New Zealand and Japan also belong to the Consultative Group on Indonesia (CGI), which is giving increasing amounts of aid in support of projects in a

Growth of trade between Indonesia and the European Union, 1990-94, (US$ millions)

	Exports from Indonesia	Imports to Indonesia
1990	3,030	4,144
1991	3,743	4,710
1992	4,843	5,400
1993	5,295	5,652
1994	6,329	5,657

Source: *Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbook, 1995*, International Monetary Fund

variety of fields. All these countries are in a position to argue that the principles of territorial integrity that were defended in Kuwait during the Gulf War should be defended in East Timor. However, the aid granting body is itself a reminder of how Indonesia can react to criticism. In its previous incarnation, as the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI), it was chaired by the Dutch government. In 1992, following Dutch criticism of Indonesian military conduct at the Santa Cruz massacre, Indonesia rejected Dutch aid and announced that it was withdrawing from the forum. The CGI was then set up under the auspices of the World Bank.

The EU often expresses concern about human rights, and senior politicians routinely raise human rights cases with their Indonesian counterparts. Where specific cases are under discussion, they afford some protection to individuals at risk. However, in going only this far, they ignore the root cause of the problem – Indonesia's illegal occupation of East Timor. In February 1996, under increasing pressure from non-governmental organisations, the EU announced a new common position on East Timor (*see page 25*). It pledged to contribute to the achievement of a fair, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor, which fully respects the interests and legitimate aspirations of the Timorese people, in accordance with international law. It remains to be seen whether this will significantly alter the approach adopted.

Out of deference to their Portuguese ally, the governments of the European Union have not recognised the legality of Indonesia's annexation of East Timor. However, by failing to take effective action, European governments have undermined the force of international law and have encouraged Indonesia to believe that it can breach international law with impunity.

Neither the Timorese nor the government of Portugal have asked the European community to go to war for East Timor as they went to war for Kuwait. Nevertheless, the principles involved are comparable and it is reasonable to expect the EU to be resolute in its diplomacy. Backing its stated aims as expressed in the common position, the EU should reaffirm Indonesia's breach of international law, and vote in UN fora in favour of resolutions that support Indonesian withdrawal. EU governments – particularly Britain, France and Germany, which have close relationships with Jakarta – should use their diplomatic ties with the Indonesian government to press for a substantial reduction in the numbers of Indonesian troops in East Timor. This would help create the conditions for an eventual UN supervised referendum enabling the East Timorese people to determine their future.

Principal actors – Japan

Japan is Indonesia's largest trading partner, and by far the largest bilateral contributor to the annual aid package agreed by the CGI. It is in a position to exert exceptional leverage. Although the Japanese government has refused to allow its trade and investment policies to be influenced by human rights considerations, an increasing number of Japanese politicians have become concerned about the abuses in East Timor. It is known that former president Miyazawa raised concerns about East Timor with Suharto when he visited Indonesia in 1993. In August 1994 a cross-party delegation visited East Timor, and in November Japan's ministry of foreign affairs agreed to meet East Timorese visitors. At the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in November 1994 the Japanese foreign minister expressed Japanese resolve to 'support' rather than simply to 'watch' the

The European Union's Common Position on East Timor

In its 'Common Position Concerning East Timor' (cleared for publication 25 June 1996) the Council of the European Union says it intends to pursue the following aims:

• to contribute to the achievement by dialogue of a fair, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor, which fully respects the interests and legitimate aspirations of the Timorese people, in accordance with international law

• to improve the situation in East Timor regarding respect for human rights in the territory.

To further these aims, the Position says, the European Union

• supports the initiatives undertaken in the United Nations framework which may contribute to resolving this question

• supports the current talks under the aegis of the UN secretary general with the aim of achieving effective progress

• encourages the continuation of intra-Timorese meetings under the auspices of the United Nations

• calls on the Indonesian government to adopt effective measures leading to a significant improvement in the human rights situation in East Timor, in particular by implementing fully the relevant decisions adopted by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights

• supports all appropriate action with the objective of generally strengthening respect for human rights in East Timor and substantially improving the situation of its people, by means of the resources available to the European Union and aid for action by NGOs.

UN negotiations between Portugal and Indonesia, and has apparently recently backed its intentions with a donation of US$100,000 to the intra-East Timorese dialogue. The Japanese government has also shown an interest in funding a UN human rights office in Jakarta and in Dili, provided that the Indonesian government permits the offices to be opened and the offices actually engage in effective work to protect human rights.

Principal actors — Australia

Like other western powers, Australia, East Timor's closest neighbour, condoned the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. Its foreign policy has been dominated by the assumption that relations with Indonesia are vital to Australia's long term strategic and political interests. Australia is keen to be regarded as an integral part of the Asian Pacific region. Policy on East Timor has consequently been subordinated to Australia's desire to maintain a good relationship with its large and increasingly influential neighbour, Indonesia. In January 1978 the Australian government gave full legal recognition to Indonesia's occupation of East Timor.

Australia's government went further than any other towards legitimising Indonesian rule by allowing oil prospecting and development between East Timor and Australia — a 320 km long expanse of sea bed that belongs in law to Portugal as the administering power recognised by the United Nations. Canberra concluded a treaty with Indonesia in 1989 which divided the continental shelf under the Timor sea between it and Indonesia.

The Australian government has in the past been wiling to accept Timorese refugees; the largest Timorese community outside East Timor — of about 6,000 people — is now in Australia. Despite its political position being marked by opportunism and a strong desire to accommodate Indonesia, there were signs in 1995 that Canberra was becoming frustrated at Indonesia's failure to achieve reconciliation with the East Timorese.

A sizeable body of Australian public opinion dissociates itself from its government's pragmatic approach. This came

to light in 1995 when Indonesia's General Mantiri, who took over command of the Udayana military region (which includes East Timor) after the Santa Cruz massacre, was appointed ambassador to Australia. He angered Australian public opinion by making remarks justifying the massacre. The public outcry in Australia at his appointment persuaded the Indonesian government to name a substitute. Australian policy is ambiguous, however, and with the March 1996 election of the Liberal/Conservative government of John Howard, it is not expected to change significantly.

Australia should be prepared to put greater emphasis behind isolated expressions of concern over human rights in East Timor, and back up the July 1994 statement of the then foreign minister Gareth Evans that Indonesia should reduce its forces in East Timor and enter a dialogue with the East Timorese, including the resistance. Australia should work with governments and the United Nations to gain support for demilitarisation, talks and a settlement.

Principal actors — the United States

The US government looked the other way when Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975 and has since supported Indonesia with arms and diplomacy, although in recent years there has been a gradual shift to a more critical stance. In addition to being a valuable source of raw materials, Indonesia was vital to American strategy during the Cold War because, straddling the Indian and Pacific Oceans, it controls sea passage between the eastern and western ports of what was then the Soviet Union and between Japan, the Middle East and Europe. One of the few deep-water passages for nuclear submarines passes to the north of East Timor.

During the 1970s the United States regarded Indonesia as one of its safest allies. This was a period when US officials believed the war in Indochina threatened their strategic control of South East Asia. Indonesia invaded East Timor a few months after the reunification of Vietnam and the victory of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. The following year, US military aid to Indonesia was increased, and sales and spare

parts for US-made counterinsurgency weaponry, such as the 'Bronco' bomber, proved vital to Indonesia's successes against Fretilin in 1978 and 1979, and were devastating to East Timor's rural population.

Concern among Democratic and Republican members of the US Congress was displayed from the earliest days after the invasion, and is credited with helping to curb some of Indonesia's worst excesses from the late 1970s onward. In October 1992, in the last stages of the Bush administration, Congress cut International Military and Training Aid funds to Indonesia worth US$2.3 million. Growing concern following the Santa Cruz massacre put pressure on President Bill Clinton to modify US policy.

In March 1993, shortly after Clinton took office, the United States for the first time gave its backing to a resolution at the UN Commission on Human Rights condemning Indonesia's human rights record in East Timor. This prompted other major powers such as the European Union and Australia to support the resolution. Clinton raised the issue of East Timor in each of his three meetings with President Suharto between 1993 and 1995. Unlike any previous US president, he also acknowledged doing so. Clinton is reported to have told Suharto that the people of East Timor should have control over their own affairs.

The United States, along with Japan, should make much stronger diplomatic representations to the Jakarta regime to negotiate more seriously at the United Nations. The alliance of US and Japanese parliamentarians, assisted by non-governmental organisations, must continue to facilitate joint US-Japanese initiatives on East Timor.

Arenas for progress — International diplomacy

When Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975, it could not have predicted the virtual downfall of the communist world, and with it the end of the Cold War. Governments whose understanding it could count on at that time are now under pressure from strong human rights lobbies, and are willing to be more critical. Debate and negotiation towards a just and lasting settlement is now taking place in a range of arenas.

Increased interest from the news media, coupled with activity by citizens in western and Asian countries, has ensured that governments have not been allowed to forget East Timor. Civil groups and human rights organisations are at work, networks of organisations and individuals have grown stronger and communications systems have improved. The result is that wherever the representatives of Indonesia travel, and whenever the government receives visitors, questions about human rights in East Timor inevitably crop up.

Arenas for progress —the role of civil groups

Many national and international solidarity movements and NGOs have taken up the East Timorese cause. Along with countries such as Guatemala and Burma, East Timor has in recent years been among the issues most frequently discussed in international fora, including the UN Commission on Human Rights and its subcommission, the UN Conference on Human Rights in 1993, and various regional trade meetings such as APEC and the 1996 Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). During ASEM, discussions on the human rights situation in East Timor gained extensive newspaper coverage. This may be attributed to the East Timorese themselves, whose resistance is gaining a higher profile, but also to the growth, dedication and organisational capacity of the solidarity movement worldwide. The strength of this support, and its capacity to put pressure on governments, has played a key role in the East Timorese struggle.

Well known figures have spoken out on East Timor, including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Mairead Corrigan Maguire and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Many other foreign leaders have raised the issue in Jakarta, including Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland and South Africa's President Nelson Mandela who, on a visit in 1995, brought up the question privately with Suharto at the insistence of South African church and human rights organisations.

Pressure from civil groups and well-known personalities has forced governments to raise human rights concerns with Indonesian government officials. Although many governments treat these representations as a formality aimed

at appeasing their electorates, the United States, Japanese and Norwegian governments have offered financial support as well as diplomatic expertise to the United Nations to facilitate its negotiating task.

It is not just high profile personalities who have made an impact. In January 1996 women from a non-violent direct action group broke into a British Aerospace factory in the UK, where Hawk 'trainer' jets – part of a batch of 24 destined for Indonesia – were being assembled. With household hammers, the women deactivated sensitive instrumentation on one of the craft. In July 1996 a jury acquitted the women of criminal damage after hearing that their intention was to prevent a greater crime – of genocide – being committed against the people of East Timor.

Continuing resistance

East Timorese displays of rejection of Indonesian rule stimulate the international solidarity movement as well as the media. Young East Timorese know they can make an international impact at strategic moments. At the time of the November 1994 APEC conference in Jakarta, Timorese occupied the US embassy, demanding a meeting with President Clinton who was attending the conference. This was in spite of the military's intimidation of the East Timorese student community in Jakarta prior to the conference. The episode embarrassed Suharto, as media attention switched from the conference to East Timor.

By 1996 other foreign embassies in Jakarta had experienced similar occupations by East Timorese students seeking asylum in the West. In a new development, Indonesian activists have been accompanying the East Timorese in embassy occupations, even though they cannot expect asylum. Demonstrations have also broken out in East Timor itself. Another new phenomenon emerged when a boat load of East Timorese refugees landed in Australia in May 1995, setting a precedent for further escape attempts.

Arenas for progress — the United Nations

Negotiations under the UN secretary general

The United Nations is the body officially mandated to resolve the East Timor problem. UN resolution 37/30 of 23 November 1982 asks the UN secretary general to 'initiate consultations with all parties directly concerned, with a view to exploring avenues for achieving a comprehensive settlement'. It also asks the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation *(see page 34)* to consider the question.

Negotiations between Portugal — which the UN still considers to be the administering power — and Indonesia have to date solved nothing. Portugal insists that the East Timorese must be included in the process, while Indonesia maintains that the East Timorese asked for integration, and presents integration as a historical fact which cannot be reversed.

Following the 1991 massacre, the UN secretary general re-established meetings between Indonesia and Portugal. Since September 1992, the two foreign secretaries have met eight times. These so-called Tripartite Talks consist of two bilateral meetings with the UN secretary general, followed by a joint session, after which a public statement is made. Each year the secretary general reports back to the UN General Assembly, where the practice has been to defer a discussion or vote in favour of allotting more time to the negotiation process.

Although the negotiating positions remain opposed, the past few UN supervised sessions have seen the two governments attempt to formulate 'confidence-building measures'. Indonesia has recently maintained the initiative. Whilst opposing the inclusion of East Timorese interlocutors in talks at ministerial level, in 1993 and 1994 Indonesia sponsored so-called reconciliation talks between itself and East Timor. This was, at least initially, an attempt to out-manoeuvre East Timorese opinion.

'Reconciliation talks'

The reconciliation talks, which consisted of two meetings in Britain in December 1993 and September 1994, were an attempt to bring what Indonesia regarded as pro- and anti-

integration East Timorese together to discuss limited ways of improving the situation in East Timor. The initiative was, from the start, heavily controlled: the fundamental question over the political future of East Timor was not on the agenda; also, the people taking part did not represent the full spectrum of East Timorese opinion. Most of the principal participants picked by the Indonesian government to run the process lacked credibility in the eyes of the wider East Timorese community.

Bishop Belo was critical of the initiative, suspecting an attempt to undermine the role of the United Nations and dissatisfied at the exclusion of a wider range of opinion. However, a positive outcome was that the United Nations, which had sent an observer to the second meeting in Britain, picked up on the initiative.

All-inclusive dialogue

In early 1995 the UN set about organising what became known as the All-Inclusive Intra-East Timorese Dialogue. This was the first time since the 1975 invasion that East Timorese alone had been officially convened to discuss East Timor. The meeting eventually took place in June 1995 in Austria. Bishop Belo played a key role in keeping all sides talking.

The dialogue aimed to discuss demilitarisation, security, human rights, and the transfer of power to civilian leaders. Portugal and Indonesia were not allowed into the talks but, being UN members, were able to influence the agenda. Once again sovereignty was kept off the agenda at Indonesia's insistence. In the final declaration, the talks re-affirmed UN resolution 37/30 of November 1982 which calls on all states to recognise the right of Portuguese Timor to self-determination. Indonesia discovered that its carefully selected apologists present at the meeting had not lived up to expectations. Jakarta later forced them to issue a retraction of the final declaration.

The talks were heralded as an encouraging development by the participants and most observers of the process, but were regarded as a serious diplomatic mishap by the Indonesian authorities, which from then on sought to downgrade the process. In spite of the East Timorese request to meet before

further Portugal-Indonesia ministerial meetings, the second dialogue was not allowed to precede the ministers' meeting in London in January 1996. It took place instead in March, and was unproductive. Key participants in the first meeting, former governor Guilherme Gonçalves and Bishop Belo, did not attend. For one thing, Belo was dissatisfied that the previously agreed statement had not been acted upon. The participants at the March meeting signed a bland declaration so as to prolong the dialogue. Although the agenda of these meetings is severely limited, they remain at present the only official forum for discussion among East Timorese.

Human Rights Commission

Following the Santa Cruz massacre, Indonesia has come under more scrutiny at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, which meets in Geneva for six weeks every year. Indonesia has been largely successful in preventing the adoption of resolutions denouncing its record. In 1992, 1994, 1995 and 1996 the Commission settled for the weaker and more conciliatory Consensus Statement – which it is supposed to adhere to and implement.

Events turned against Indonesia in 1993 however, when the United States and Australia backed a strong resolution that reflected the new Clinton administration's interest in the issue. The resolution called on special UN investigators to visit Indonesia and East Timor and report to the Commission.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Professor PH Kooijmans, was in East Timor at the time of the Santa Cruz massacre. His report recommended the curbing of the powers of the police and armed forces by an independent judiciary, Indonesian ratification of the UN convention against torture, and the establishment of an authority to deal with complaints of human rights violations.

The most important report was that of the Special Rapporteur on Summary, Extra-judicial or Arbitrary Executions, Bacré Waly N'Diaye, who in 1994 found the Indonesian authorities 'determined to suppress political dissent'. He held out little hope for progress until justice was seen to be done over the Santa Cruz massacre, and called for

an end to impunity for the armed forces. Ominously, N'Diaye also found that the conditions that brought about the Santa Cruz massacre still existed in East Timor.

Decolonisation committee

The UN Special Committee regarding the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples exists to oversee decolonisation of dependent territories. It hears an increasing number of petitions on the question of East Timor each summer. More than 30 organisations and individuals made presentations in 1996. Consideration of East Timor at this committee every year serves as a reminder of the illegality of its occupation.

Arenas for progress — Public pressure

The US administration has been under increased pressure from sources in the House of Representatives, the Senate, the US Catholic Bishops' Conference and other religious and secular organisations to intervene with President Suharto. Since 1991, human rights have been frequently raised with President Suharto, and particularly since 1992, some effort to restrict military training aid to Indonesia has been made. The United States has also given diplomatic support to UN efforts on the issue since 1992, as has Japan. And while it is hard to see Portugal being able to persuade the rest of its European allies to enter into a significant political dialogue with Indonesia over East Timor, the EU member states still defer to the Portuguese position and refuse to recognise Indonesia's claim to sovereignty over East Timor. Thus the situation will remain as long as the situation in East Timor itself is unchanged.

Powerful lobbies from domestic trade and employment ministries still prioritise European jobs. Research into British aid to Indonesia has highlighted the fact that two-thirds is accounted for by commercially oriented Aid and Trade Provision funding. While the British government denies any link between aid provision and trade, it has been noted that aid commitments have coincided with lucrative arms contracts, such as Indonesia's order for 24 British Aerospace Hawk trainer jets.

While it is unlikely that influential powers such as the United States, Australia, the European Union and Japan will be prepared to place human rights and justice for the East Timorese before the considerations of international trade, public pressure on Indonesia in these countries has steadily increased over the past five years and could ultimately help bring about a just solution to the East Timor tragedy.

Paths to peace

East Timor continues to receive wide international attention, to the chagrin of the Indonesian government. Experts on Indonesia say Jakarta's deep discomfort over international reaction carries with it the seeds of change.

A range of options are under discussion regarding East Timor's future. The CNRM continues to ask for talks without preconditions, as a prelude to negotiations. Demands on the East Timorese side range from full independence as a separate country – still the stated desire of the resistance – to negotiated autonomy within the Indonesian archipelago, an option backed by a number of East Timorese in the Indonesian administration who would stand to lose from outright independence. There remain a number of those, especially in the exiled community in Lisbon, who favour continued links with Portugal. This option is unlikely to be pursued since Portugal itself, although supportive of East Timor, has no wish to retain colonial style links.

Tripartite Talks

Portugal and Indonesia have a long way to go to reach a common position. The upgrading of diplomatic contacts is known to be under discussion, but Portugal is insisting on the release of key political prisoners in exchange. Various Portuguese-Indonesian friendship associations have organised initiatives, but these have been viewed by most East Timorese and Portuguese as driven chiefly by economic motives.

CNRM peace plan

A comprehensive proposal for peace negotiations has been put forward by José Ramos Horta, chief international representa-

tive of the East Timorese resistance. The proposal was unveiled at a meeting organised by the Human Rights Sub-Committee of the European Parliament in April 1992. The three-phase proposal calls for a ceasefire and the immediate release of political prisoners, followed by a reduction in the number of Indonesian troops in East Timor to 1,000 within two years. UN agencies would be allowed access to the territory. After this two year period, the government of East Timor would be accountable to an elected provincial assembly, with Indonesia retaining sovereignty and control over foreign policy. A referendum, with independence as one option, would be held after either five or 10 years of this arrangement – that is either seven or 12 years after the ceasefire. Indonesia could, if it wished, extend the five years to 10. This peace plan has not been taken up by Indonesia. It requires a response.

Belo peace brokerage

Bishop Belo is widely regarded as a possible peace broker who enjoys the confidence of the majority of the East Timorese. In 1993 he called for special status for East Timor, involving autonomy, beginning in the cultural and religious domains. Belo has pointed to the relationship enjoyed by the Azores with Portugal and Puerto Rico with the United States as possible models. He sees autonomy as a stage which could be followed by a referendum, and has called for the withdrawal of Indonesian troops.[10] Ultimately, Belo has made clear, the people of East Timor must be properly consulted.

Gradual change

Whether or not the intra-East Timorese dialogue proceeds alongside the talks between Portugal and Indonesia, the consultation of East Timorese representatives will be indispensable. Indonesian attempts to rely on East Timorese personalities under their political control have been unsuccessful. The handling of their pre-eminent political prisoner, Xanana Gusmão, admired in Indonesia as well as in East Timor, will be crucial. He is acknowledged as vital to any peace deal, and much as the apartheid regime in South Africa adopted a conciliatory approach to an undisputed leader in Nelson

Mandela, Indonesia's approach to Xanana could prove pivotal.

The negotiations have yet to be undertaken, so both Portugal and Indonesia can play for time. Portugal would argue that the tide of world opinion is running against Indonesia, and that a few more years are all that is needed. The political scene in Indonesia is changing, with the ageing of President Suharto and the death in 1996 of his wife, Siti Hartinah Suharto, his closest political adviser. The rising political challenge to the Suharto regime from the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI), led by Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of former President Sukarno, could eventually alter the country's political landscape. Although forces under the control of the Suharto government have removed Megawati from her position as head of the PDI, it is unlikely that the momentum of political opposition can be forestalled forever. The Suharto family is increasingly resented as corrupt, the democracy movement and popular protest are growing.

In spite of media manipulation, there is increasing knowledge among ordinary Indonesians of the situation in East Timor, and democracy activists in Indonesia have started to link the East Timorese struggle to their own. Lately, a number of prominent Indonesian academics – including George Aditjondro, a former lecturer at Satya Wacana University, Salatiga, Indonesia, and labour leader Mochtar Pakpahan – have spoken out on the East Timor question. Aditjondro was exiled to Australia for doing so. Significant change in the Indonesian scene may be on the horizon.

On the other hand, those in power in Indonesia may hope that before long, the East Timorese guerrillas will have been wiped out: military operations in late 1995 and early 1996 aimed to capture the present resistance leader, Konis Santana. Jakarta also counts on the West's economic interest in maintaining good relations, as US and EU trade with Asia becomes increasingly important to western economies.

Among the East Timorese the torch has passed to the younger generation, which has known nothing but Indonesian rule. Young people are resolved to go on opposing the occupation. In the words of an East Timorese woman: 'We have nothing left to lose. We are human beings and they have

treated us like insects. We will never accept them here. Even if we have to die resisting we will resist. We have our dignity and our own identity. And God is with us.'

The way forward

East Timor's suffering will continue unless Indonesia fundamentally changes its policies and recognises the rights of the East Timorese under international law.

The prospects for an end to East Timor's subjection depend not only on the United Nations and particular governments, but also on the citizens of the world and civil groups who oppose the betrayal of East Timor. People throughout the world have begun to add their voices to a growing cry for peace with justice for the East Timorese. The strength and momentum of this worldwide movement may yet succeed.

In the words of Aloisius Nobuo Soma, retired Bishop of Nagoya, Japan, addressing delegates at the Asia Pacific Conference on East Timor in June 1994: 'Blessed are those who work for justice. The people of East Timor are working for justice, fighting for their rights and they are blessed [...] God is raising up people everywhere to walk alongside the East Timorese [...] In 1989 Bishop Belo wrote that the world has forgotten East Timor. Let us show that it is not true.' [11]

When asked if there is a single measure that would reduce tension and improve the East Timor situation, Bishop Belo has said that it is the withdrawal of Indonesian troops from the territory. The international community has a responsibility to bring pressure to bear to meet this request and to ensure that the rights of the East Timorese under international law are respected.

Recommendations for the international community

Human rights

1. Call for the unconditional release of prisoners detained for their political views and for the immediate cessation of arbitrary arrest, torture and other violations of international human rights law by security forces in East Timor.

2. Encourage the Indonesian government to launch a proper, impartial inquiry into past human rights violations, especially the Santa Cruz Massacre, in order to resolve the circumstances surrounding extrajudicial executions and disappearances. Compensation should be accorded to families of victims.

3. Support rigorous, impartial on-site human rights monitoring by the United Nations and press for regular, unhindered access to East Timor by non-governmental human rights organisations.

4. Press for an immediate reduction of Indonesian troops deployed in East Timor, and their eventual withdrawal in the context of a comprehensive settlement.

Continued

Negotiations

5. Support the Tripartite Talks under the aegis of the UN secretary general, while pressing for substantial progress towards a just, and comprehensive settlement, in line with international law and the will of the Timorese people.

6. Encourage the parties seriously to consider the peace plan put forward by the National Council of Maubere Resistance as a framework for resolving the conflict.

7. Support the continuation of the All-Inclusive Intra-East Timorese Dialogue under UN auspices, while pressing for the inclusion of all recognised East Timorese leaders, including Xanana Gusmão, in the talks.

Broader relations

8. Provide development assistance to East Timor through local church and non-governmental organisations, rather than through governmental agencies.

9. Restrict arms sales to Indonesia and review broader aid, trade, investment and military cooperation relations if there is no meaningful movement forward by the government of Indonesia on the question of East Timor.

Notes

1. Taylor (1991).

2. ibid p58.

3. Statistics on killings in East Timor are subject to fierce debate. However, 200,000 is thought to be a reasonably accurate estimate and is the figure given by Amnesty International and Asia Watch.

4. For a survey of the legal aspects of Indonesia's occupation of East Timor, see Roger S Clark, '"The Decolonisation" of East Timor and the United Nations Norms on Self-determination and Aggression', in *International Law and the Question of East Timor*. London: CIIR/IPJET, 1995.

5. Taylor (1991).

6. Quoted by John Pilger in *Death of a Nation*.

7. Ibid.

8. The word 'Maubere' is a male name, adopted by Fretilin to express 'the oppressed'. The female equivalent is 'Buibere'.

9. Mara Stankovitch (1996) *The European Union and ASEAN – A background paper*. London: CIIR.

10. *Timor Link*, October 1993.

11. *Timor Link*, September 1994.

Acronyms and abbreviations

ABRI	Indonesian Armed Forces
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
Apodeti	Timorese Popular Democratic Association
ASDT	Social Democratic Association of Timor
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
CGI	Consultative Group on Indonesia
CNRM	National Council of Maubere Resistance
EU	European Union
Fretilin	Revolutionary Front for the Independence of East Timor
GKTT	Protestant Church in East Timor
IGGI	Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PDI	Indonesian Democratic Party
PKI	Indonesian Communist Party
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
UDT	Timorese Democratic Union
UN	United Nations
WCC	World Council of Churches

Further reading

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Registered office as above
Charity Registration No.294329

Since Indonesia's invasion of East Timor in 1975, at least 200,000 East Timorese have died as a result of war, famine, disease and extrajudicial killing. The Santa Cruz cemetery massacre of 1991, captured on film and broadcast worldwide, brought the struggle of the East Timorese for self determination to the world's attention as never before. Today, their country is commonly cited as an example of a place where human rights are regularly and systematically abused. The United Nations has never recognised the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia and there are high-level diplomatic moves to solve the 'Timor question'. Yet the flow of aid and sale of western arms to Indonesia continue.

This *Comment* assesses the East Timorese struggle for independence 20 years on from the invasion, looks at the key players and analyses the prospects for a just peace and an end to the international betrayal of the East Timorese people.

UK Price £2.50
ISBN 1 85287 151 2
© CIIR September 1996

Catholic Institute for International Relations
Unit 3, Canonbury Yard
190a New North Road, London N1 7BJ, UK

Printed by the Russell Press Limited, Radford Mill, Norton Street, Nottingham NG7 3HN

Design Rich Cowley